

Submission
No 182

INQUIRY INTO PRIVATISATION OF BUS SERVICES

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 26 February 2022

Partially
Confidential

The Transport for NSW has implemented a significant change to the Eastern Suburbs bus routes which left many in our community without efficient and safe travel options. The bus routes that have impacted us the most are:

339 Clovelly to Circular Quay
X39 Express Clovelly to CBD via Taylor Square
400 Bondi to Burwood
316 Bondi to Eastgardens
373 Coogee to Circular Quay

The 339 bus route has been changed to terminate at Central Station, which means that young, vulnerable, people with disability and elderly are required to connect with another bus travelling along Elizabeth Street into the city. This has led to:

1. Increase travel time; from 30 minutes to at least 50 minutes.
2. Confusion due to disorientation and lack of understanding on how best to navigate through the city
3. Increase isolation and less social encounters due to sense of loss and anxiety.
4. Delay in safely returning home from a night show, theatre, club, entertainment; and thus an increase in mental health illness and decrease in social and cultural gain.

Scenario: An elderly 80 year old neighbour would look forward to her once a week social outing to the NSW Art Gallery; the 339 bus drivers got to know her very well and look out for her at the bus stop along Clovelly Road. They would lower the bus for her and assist her in taking a seat. She would converse with them and tell them about the art exhibition she is about to see after her tea and scones. She gets off the 339 at Hyde Park (near Market Street) and walks across the park towards the Cathedral and then to the Art Gallery. This would be her favourite walk, stopping and checking the flower beds and lovely gardens. She knows very well how to safely return to Elizabeth Street and wait for the 339 to take her back home to Clovelly. She would do this weekly trip within 3 and half hours so that she can be home in time for her nurse home visit.

Now, this elderly 80 years old; is devastated and not willing to travel anymore. She finds the disruption in connecting with another bus from Central to be too confusing and not safe. She is not able to easily look out for another bus. She doesn't know the bus numbers and will not be able to remember which one would take her further down Elizabeth Street. She fears from being pushed or even being slow in getting on another bus when others would be doing the same especially if the bus is crowded already. She feels very anxious and depressed. She has lost her sense of independence. She finds the connections to be too confusing and very disruptive. Her direct non-disruptive bus trip into the Art Gallery used to be her purpose in life, an occasion to dress-up and go out. Now, she has lost her sense of community engagement and she is isolate. It is heart-breaking and simply cruel to have imposed this on her.

The x39 bus route has been removed/cancelled. This was the only bus that would travel from Clovelly along Taylor Square, Oxford Street and then to Martin Place.

Scenario: A single parent nurse who lives in Clovelly and works at St Vincent Hospital in Darlinghurst has been able to adjust their work family life balance by managing to care for their children and attending to hospital shifts efficiently. This parent had the time to look after the health, nutrition, and wellbeing of the young children in the morning and then

drop them off to daycare and OOSH (Out of School Hours) before catching the x39 to commence their shift at St Vincent. Now, with the cancellation of the x39; the parent attempted to catch a 350 bus towards Bondi Junction and then connect onto another bus that travels along Oxford street. The trip into the hospital has now been extended from 20 minutes to more than 50 minutes. The parent attempted as well to adjust their morning routine to then find the children too tired and unhappy. The nurse had to give up their job which is such a shame and a loss to us all. This is not detrimental only due to loss of work, though, it is a huge pressure on maintaining good mental health and wellbeing especially with caring for young children. This is a case of a single parent who had to give up their career to be able to care for young children.

The 400 bus route has been removed and replaced with 390x and in some sections by the 350 bus.

Scenario: The 400 bus route used to provide my children with a safe and direct route into Eastgardens where they meet friends and walk across to Heffron park for their sporting activities. The 390x no longer travel via Eastgardens and the 350 bus which does, takes too long to get them there. The length of the trip is impacting because my children no longer have sufficient time to come from school, change into sports gear, replenish their hunger with healthy options and then catch a bus in time to get them there. A 15 minute trip from Carrington Road (closest intersection to my home) to Eastgardens takes now more than 40 minute and 2 connections. My children have opted this year to stop any extracurricular sports because there is no safe and efficient way to get them to Heffron and back home. I am not ready to allow them to travel there directly from school, carrying their heavy school bags and sports gear and without proper healthy food/drink. It is for their own good and state of mind that they come home first and then go to sports. They have lost their independence and sense of community. They used to volunteer to coach younger groups and help pay forward for the support they received from the community. It is simply heart-breaking to see them loose this sense of belonging and the importance of community spirit. It becomes too overwhelming and disheartening to think of all the negative effect that the bus changes have imposed on us. It is very upsetting as I now feel guilty not being able to drive them there and pick them up safely. I am a working parent like many others. This sense of helplessness is causing me too much anxiety. More so, my children have lost an opportunity to keep fit and participate in team sports.

The 316 bus route used to travel along the Spot in Randwick where my children attend school. This bus is now cancelled/removed.

Scenario: This bus route used to provide an option for my children to get home safely should they miss the school bus or stay back at school for extra studies. More so, it used to be a great alternative to the school bus on a busy rainy day. Lately, with the wet weather in Sydney, my children, amongst many other school kids, would walk up to Randwick Junction to catch the 390x and travel home. Even though the walk is good for them after a long day at school; it is not safe in the dark hours of winter nor adequate on a rainy day. It has been on too many occasions now, my children arriving home soaked and feeling miserable. The lack of adequate bus transport has become too barbaric and very painful. The level of good living has plummeted, and this has increased family anxiety and unhappiness. The bus route changes, should they be linked to bus privatisation or revenue collection to offset poorly made decisions/projects; then the Government of NSW should be held accountable towards

the increase in poor mental health, family anxiety, children obesity and a deteriorating level of living in Sydney.

The 373 bus no longer travels into the city, though it terminates at Museum. It is no longer an option for us to connect with along Alison Road after catching the 339 from Clovelly. The 339 no longer travels into the city. It terminates at Central.

Scenario: Once the 339 travels along Alison Road near the Randwick Racecourse, hopping onto the 373 to the city is no longer an option because this Coogee bus terminates now at Museum. Leaving the 339 to get onto the L2 is not efficient either because of the walking distance from the bus stop and delay in crossing major busy roads. On a really hot summer day or wild raining day; the effort in disembarking and attempting to find the best option to continue travelling into work is disruptive and causes so much anxiety and bad temper. The lack of bus shelters and safe connection paths are not helping either. It is not really an option to leave home earlier than expected so to meet the extended travel time. Family life is still very important and so is the wellbeing of children with their sleep and eating habits.

This should not be allowed in a country like ours. It goes against the Transport for NSW mission statement: Our purpose is to make NSW a better place to live, work and visit. The bus route changes are not delivering “a better place to live”; the loss of income and job (especially in health) is not delivering “a better place to work” either. Based on the scenarios that I have taken the time and effort to summarise; show alone, my own disappointment and lack of trust in the NSW government to give us “a better place to live and work”. I have submitted my feedback during the consultation period, I have written to the NSW Premier, I have also written to the Minister of Transport. I filled out many complaints on the Transport for NSW website and voiced on many occasions my disappointment and how my fear towards the development of poor mental health will add towards my own poor well-being and could jeopardise my career and work life balance.

I urge you to look beyond what is Bus privatisation and to address further how the disruption in efficient and reliable travels have impacted us poorly.